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Proceedings at the Dedication  
of Charter Oak Hall

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ARMORY OF COLT'S PATENT FIRE ARMS MANUFACTURING COMPANY

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PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

Dedication

OF

Charter Oak Hall

UPON THE

SOUTH MEADOW GROUNDS

OF

COL. SAMUEL COLT.

WITH THE ADDRESSES ON THE OCCASION

By Messrs. Hamersley, Stuart, and Deming.

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EDITED BY

J. DEANE ALDEN.

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Hartford:

PRESS OF CASE, TIFFANY AND COMPANY.

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TO THE HON. MESSRS. W. J. HAMERSLEY, I. W. STUART, AND H.  
C. DEMING :

Having enjoyed the pleasure of listening to your instructive and eloquent addresses, on the occasion of the Inauguration of "Charter Oak Hall," the undersigned, employees in Colt's Armory, have the honor to request you to furnish, as early as may suit your convenience, manuscripts of the addresses for publication.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

ALLYN GOODWIN,  
L. T. PEARSON,  
THEODORE STUDLEY,  
WM. TULLER,  
A. WINSLOW,

and two hundred and eighty others.

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HARTFORD, May 13th, 1856.

GENTLEMEN: We have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 12th inst., requesting us to furnish manuscript reports of the remarks respectively submitted by us, on the occasion of the dedication of "Charter Oak Hall."

So far as our memories may enable us so to do, it will afford us pleasure to comply with your kind and flattering invitation.

Be pleased to receive our best wishes for the success of the "Armory," which is the field of your labors, and for your own individual prosperity.


We remain,

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

WM. JAS. HAMERSLEY,  
I. W. STUART,  
HENRY C. DEMING.

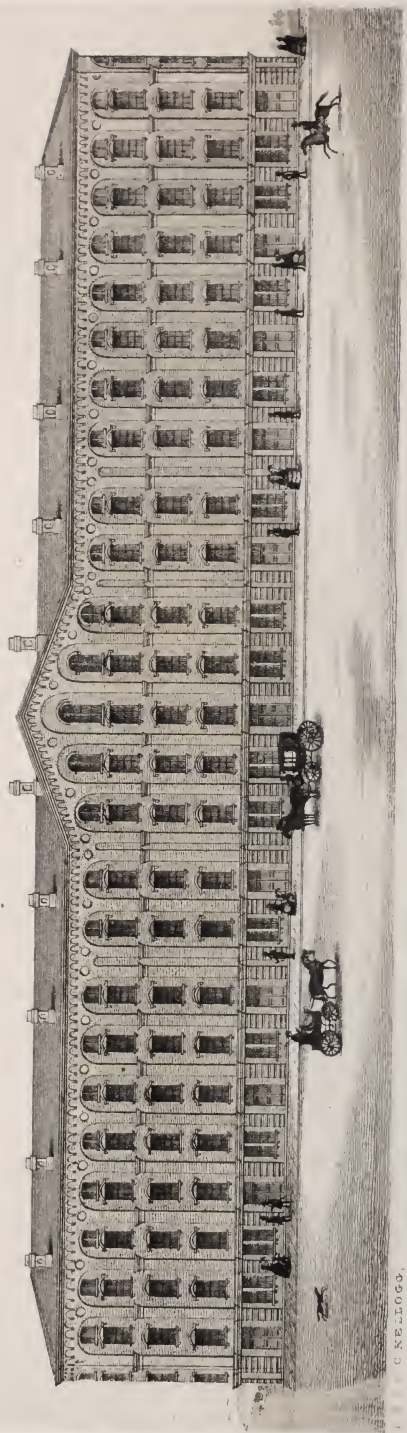
To Messrs Allyn Goodwin, L. T. Pearson, Theodore Studley, Wm. Tuller,  
A. Winslow, and others.



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HARTFORD, CONN.

CHARTER OAK BUILDING.

C. KELLOGG.

## PROCEEDINGS.

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ON the evening of May the sixth, under circumstances highly novel and imposing, the new Hall, which has been recently constructed by Col. Samuel Colt in connection with his Armory, and other improvements upon the South Meadows in Hartford, was duly dedicated. No occasion of its kind ever passed off more happily than this—and none, in Hartford, was ever so pleasantly associated with the vital interests of capital and labor, and with the material growth, prosperity, and good fortune of the city.

The building which contains the Hall, is a lofty structure of brick, triangular in form, and is situated just west of the Armory of Col. Colt, at the corner of Huyshope and Charter Oak Avenues—upon a conspicuous and beautiful spot in the valley of the Connecticut. A faithful representation of it, as it will appear when its extensions are completed, may be seen in the print opposite.

The Hall, which is accessible by a winding stairway, comprising three flights of stairs, occupies the whole of the fourth story—the rest of the edifice being divided

into numerous rooms that are designed for a great variety of useful purposes—chiefly, however, for those of business. It is a spacious and tasteful apartment, and reflects the highest credit upon the skill of H. A. G. Pomeroy, the able architect in the employ of Col. Colt, who planned it, and upon the handiwork of Messrs Stow and Borgelt, the artists who painted and embellished it. It is elegantly frescoed, well-ventilated, thoroughly lighted by gas, and finished throughout in a substantial and workmanlike manner.

Upon one of the panels on the wall is delineated, with historic accuracy and fine effect, a map of Hartford as it was in 1640, during the period of its first settlement—while upon another and adjacent panel, that portion of the South Meadows now occupied by the improvements of Col. Colt is faithfully portrayed—and it is in contemplation to fill up the remaining panels with farther appropriate drawings—thus making the walls themselves instructive teachers of history and of art. The rostrum, or speaker's stand—directly in front of which was displayed, on occasion of the celebration, a bronze figure of a colt rampant, exquisitely wrought in Col. Colt's own establishment—is at the narrow or western end of the Hall, and is furnished with a neat and permanent desk or pulpit—while opposite, at the eastern end, was erected for the occasion an ample platform for the accommodation of a musical band. The Hall—in height twenty feet, and in length one hundred feet—is capable of accommodating, seated, about one thousand persons, and is to be devoted, in



the special purpose of Col. Colt, to the benefit of the thousand workmen and their families, who are more or less directly connected with the business and the interests of his establishment.

The time for the inauguration of this structure was most propitious, and the Hall was early crowded, to its utmost capacity, by deeply-interested spectators. The workmen of the Armory, with their families, almost without exception, were present, and their countenances indicated as robust, happy, and intelligent a body of artisans as ever it was the fortune of any employer to collect in any one establishment. Many invited guests, from Hartford, Middletown, and other places, were also present—ladies and gentlemen, the old and the young, many of them of high distinction in society—and took a deep and grateful interest in the occasion. The Armory Band, which has been recently originated, and munificently endowed by Col. Colt himself, from among his own mechanics exclusively, for the purpose of promoting musical art within the seat of his extensive proprietorship, was also present, in a new and beautiful blue uniform, tastefully embellished, and wearing caps that bore in front the armorial bearing and the name of COLT. They discoursed “most eloquent music” in the Hall, while the audience was collecting, and proved, both at this time, and afterwards during the evening, a great addition to the charm of the occasion.

The assemblage was in due time called to order by Allyn Goodwin Esquire, a worthy citizen of Hartford,

and an electro-plater in the employ of Col. Colt—the oldest among his workmen at the head of a Department. Upon his motion, the Hon. William J. Hamersley was unanimously appointed to the Chair—to which he was conducted by Hon. Messrs H. C. Deming, the Mayor of the City, and I. W. Stuart, who, with himself, had been selected to discharge the dedicatory duties of the evening. These gentlemen were soon joined on the stage by Colonel Colt himself, accompanied by Messrs E. K. Root, the Head Superintendent of his Armory, Milton Jocelyn, his Cashier, Horace Lord, the Superintendent of his Arm-Manufacturing Department, J. Deane Alden, his Private Secretary, H. A. G. Pomeroy, his Engineer, Hon. E. Flower, Ex-Mayor of the city, R. D. Hubbard Esquire, and others, his friends and citizens of Hartford. The Band then proceeded to execute, in finished style, the popular musical airs entitled the “Hearty Quickstep,” and “Captain Blood’s Quickstep”—after which, Hon. Mr. Hamersley introduced the exercises of the occasion as follows:

## MR. HAMERSLEY'S SPEECH.

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

I HAVE been requested to take part in the exercises of this evening, in consequence of my former official connection with the earliest public proceedings in relation to the laying out of highways in the South Meadow; and because that great work of internal improvement which has been successfully consummated under the administration of my accomplished successor, was first recommended by me as chairman of a committee whose report was unanimous, and was approved by the council over which I had the honor to preside.

For this great improvement, for the elegant Hall in which we are assembled—for the spacious manufactory near us, and for all the structures within this inclosure, we are indebted to the genius, the energy, and the enterprise of Col. Samuel Colt. They are all the result of his invention of the repeating arms.

Col. Colt has not reached his present successful position, without encountering a large share of those discouragements, which so often beset the pathway of mechanical genius. But he was conscious of the value of

the new arm, and with a courage that never quailed, a determination that never wavered, and a persistency of purpose in prosecuting the object of his honorable ambition, that never failed him, he removed every impediment, surmounted every obstacle, and has finally accomplished the end he had in view.

The value of the new weapon is at length universally acknowledged, and the name of Samuel Colt is now more widely known throughout the world than that of any other living American inventor.

The young lad who left Hartford with no capital but his active brain, and willing hands, has returned in the prime of his manhood to the place where he was born, and where the ashes of his ancestors repose, and has founded an establishment which is an honor to him, and an ornament to the place of his nativity.

However great the credit to be awarded Col. Colt, it is evident he could not accomplish that which he is now doing, without the assistance of the large number of intelligent and ingenious mechanics, who are daily engaged in his service, and of the beautiful processes of labor-saving machinery, managed by men whose minds can appreciate, as well as control, the forces which they direct.

Indeed the whole history of the "repeating arms," from the time when first shaped in the "fertile workshop" of the inventor's brain, until this moment, when so many wonderful instrumentalities are engaged in forming each part, furnishes a proud illustration of inventive genius, and mechanical skill.



When I pass through the spacious factory where the celebrated "Revolvers" are made,—when I look upon the large number of capable mechanics, thoroughly versed in the duties of their calling, and when I examine the various machines, each so well adapted to the purposes for which it was framed, and each bearing the stamp of intellect, and, as it were, instinct with thought, the whole impresses me with the same sense of exaltation that I experience, when listening to the words of some majestic poem, or the strains of some magnificent musical composition.

This Hall is to be appropriated to the uses of those who labor in the employment of its enterprising proprietor, and is to be devoted to purposes of moral, intellectual, and artistic culture.

Of the latter, you have already had a specimen in the music of the admirable "Armory Band," who have this evening favored us with their first public performance, and whose "notes," I am sure, will never be regarded as "below par," in any part of the world.

This Hall is to be dedicated to one of the great powers of the earth,—a power, without which, there would be no civilization,—a power that under the direction of the inventive mind, fells the forest, builds the city, constructs the road, guides the march of commerce through the trackless waves, controls the forces of nature, and tames the elemental world :—this Hall is to be dedicated to the *Sovereignty of labor*.

A gentleman has been selected to deliver the Inaugural Address, who, in view of the name this Hall is to

bear, of his forensic abilities and cultivated intellect, of his intimate acquaintance with the history of the town, and of the lively interest he has manifested in the progress of the improvements that surround us, is, of all others, the best fitted, for the performance of the agreeable duties assigned to him.

Far in the distant future be the time when he shall cease to act as the patriotic guardian of the Charter Oak,—far distant be the time when he shall no more be with us, to illustrate the history, and adorn the literature of the State; but, when his earthly mission shall have been fulfilled, when this generation, and many succeeding generations through coming centuries, shall have played their part on the stage of life; still may the old Oak live:—live to breast the storms of winter, and put forth its green leaves beneath the summer's sun—live, to remind the people of our State, how the founders of the commonwealth clung to their chartered rights,—live, to tell the sons of Connecticut through the silent, yet impressive eloquence of its stately presence, so to act, that when the hour of political trial shall come, the principles of liberty may find refuge and protection in their hearts.

Ladies and gentlemen, this Hall will now be dedicated by the Hon. ISAAC W. STUART.

## MR. STUART'S SPEECH.

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“MR. CHAIRMAN,”—said Mr. Stuart, as he rose after the warm applause which succeeded the remarks of Mr. Hamersley had subsided, “You have given me a kind and flattering introduction”—I can only trust, Sir, that in what I have to say, I may come up to the phrase of your manifesto in my behalf.

“I am here to-night,” proceeded the Speaker, “in compliance with the solicitation of my friend Col. Colt, to aid in the inauguration of this new and beautiful room, and to bestow upon it a name. I am called upon—not lightly, but gravely—not summarily, but at fitting length—duly to initiate into the family of *Halls* this fresh offspring of the trowel, the chisel, the plane, and the painter’s art—that here upon the sweet valley of the Connecticut—in architectural company with a magnificent Armory—has sprung up suddenly, as under a magician’s wand, to extend spacious, and graceful, and grateful accommodation for numerous human wants.

This is not the first time that I have been summoned by the projector of this edifice, to perform similar service—though never before in this public manner.

Through a truly commendable judgment of his own—at the very start of his great enterprise upon these Meadows—he decided that all its principal structures, its avenues, its streets, its dock, its areas, if any, that might be reserved and embellished for public purposes—should, as from time to time the new improvements might appear, receive commemorative names—names that are replete with significance—that should remind of the Past—that should interweave with the Present—and carry the imagination forward, with gladsome anticipations, to the Future upon this the seat of his proprietorship and of his laudable pride. In pursuance of this his purpose, he early constituted me a sort of lay-pastor for his christenings. Whether, in doing this, he was attracted by any superior and clerical gravity in my appearance—or by my imputed familiarity with the territorial site he has chosen, having once had occasion to write its history—I know not—but, at all events it has been his preference that I should act in the capacity to which I allude. And the result has been thus far—

*First*, that the Aboriginal Proprietors of these Meadows and this town, the Indians of the tribe of Suckiage, are commemorated through the names of five of those the representatives of their race who deeded Hartford to its first English settlers. *Sequassen* Street preserves the memory of their proud, valiant, persevering, wary, yet faithful Head-Sachem—*Wawarme* Avenue, that of his sister and only heir—*Masseek* Street, *Weehassat* Street, and *Curcombe* Street, that of three of his successors, subordinate Sagamores—whose grant, in union with



that of some others of the Indian blood royal, gave the whole beautiful area extending from Wethersfield on the south to Windsor on the north, and from "the Great River" on the east "full six miles" into the wilderness on the west, to the Founders of our Town, the memorable emigrating band under Hooker and Haynes.

*Second*, it has resulted from the plan under consideration, that the Dutch, who were the first of Europeans to ascend the Connecticut, and build, and possess, and plant upon these "South Meadows," are also commemorated. *Huyshope* Avenue recalls at once the Fort they constructed, just by us at the mouth of the Little River, or *Riveret*, as it is more beautifully denominated in our earliest records. *Vandyke* Avenue—that directly confronting the river—preserves the name\* of the original commander of this small, yet compact fort, from whose ramparts the Dutch flag floated in pride for about twenty years—and at the same time, by a happy double meaning in its last syllable—by an accidental yet felicitous paronomasia—designates in English that gigantic embankment around us now, which has shut out the waters of the Connecticut in their maddened freshet-time, and like corresponding constructions in Holland against old Ocean's inroads, has "to the stake a struggling area bound." *Vredendale* Avenue, and *Vredendale* Dock—or *Peacedale* Avenue, and *Peacedale* Dock, as beautifully in our own vernacular this Dutch appellative signifies—notify us of the Supreme Governor, appointed

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\* *Gysbert Vandyke*, in full.

by the "High and Mighty States General" of Holland, over the fort upon this spot—Johannes De La Montagnè, a member of the Council of the New-Netherland, a Doctor of Medicine, and the owner of a blooming country seat, designated by the soothing name of *Vredendale*, which lay within the circuit of the present Empire City of the Union—that city, be it marked, from whose port the yacht *Onrust*—the first built vessel of that "*restless*"\* metropolis, whose enterprising commerce now "defies every wind, outrides every tempest, and invades every zone"—pushed the first voyage up our own Connecticut, and bore the great navigator Block to discover and map out the site of our own Hartford. This navigator, and his well-famed lieutenant Hendricxsen, are also suitably commemorated in avenues respectively entitled *Van Block* and *Hendricxsen*.

*Third*, it has resulted from the plan under consideration, that our English Progenitors, who purchased here of the native inhabitants, and who supplanted the Dutch—by virtue, as I think, of a just title, originating in the right of prior discovery, or if not in this, then in the right of legitimate conquest—are also, soon as certain new streets, already laid out, shall come to be improved, to be commemorated here through the names of their *Hooker*, their *Haynes*, their *Hopkins*, their *Webster*, and others, their choice and leading men—one of whom only, thus far, is memorialized, and in the name of *Wylllys* avenue.

And *fourth*, it has resulted, that an ever-memorable

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\* "*Restless*" is the meaning of "*Onrust*."

contest for liberty, in the infancy of Connecticut, between these our English progenitors on the one hand, and their parent country on the other—in which a Monarch Tree figured as the Deliverer of the oppressed—is also commemorated in the name of this the avenue upon which we are now assembled, and at the head of which that Deliverer still stands—the *Charter Oak Avenue*.

So it happens—by virtue of the nomenclature thus far applied—that the Indian, the Dutch, and the English antecedents of this spot, are all indicated—that a three-fold-history is signified, each part of which, by itself, is of deeply interesting import, but which, compounded, forms one of the most remarkable and thrilling pictures on record of human experience in the colonization and settlement of this New World—and that the whole of this great Past, by means of another and a modern designation—the only one which in justice ever could be thought of to mark that gigantic structure yonder, and its projector—is made to link in happily with the Present. This modern designation is COLT'S ARMORY!

Upon one of the panels, on the eastern wall of this apartment, has been painted, it will be observed, with great accuracy, a map of Hartford as it was in 1640, during the period of its first settlement—while upon another and adjacent panel, that portion of the South Meadows now occupied with the improvements of Col. Colt has also been delineated, as it was when purchased by him, with the names of the proprietors from whom he bought upon the respective lands which they

possessed—and upon a third panel it is contemplated also to exhibit the whole territorial site in question as it now is, distributed into avenues, streets, and areas—so that, most happily, the walls of this Hall will themselves be made to express, in an imposing and instructive form, lessons of history and of material improvement.\*

So much, gentlemen and ladies, for what has been already done in the baptismal circuit upon these Meadows. Now for what remains to be done to night—the naming of the Hall in which we are at present met. This duty I must discharge, as I have already intimated, gravely—and, as requested, with fitting comment.

What, then, are the wants which this apartment is intended to supply? This is the first question which naturally, and at once, rises to our minds. Let me proceed to answer it.

They are wants both intellectual and physical, both of the mind and of the body. This Hall, with special reference to the population now and hereafter to be gathered in this valley—is intended, in the first place, for a *Reading-room*, where newspapers and periodicals of an instructive character, are to be collected for quiet perusal in hours not devoted to mechanical labor. It is intended also as a room where, occasionally, as opportunity may direct, *Lectures* may be delivered, experimental or otherwise, upon science and art, upon philosophy and morals, or upon any topic where the purpose

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\* The three prints which contain the delineations to which reference is made above, will be found at the end of this pamphlet.



shall be to communicate useful knowledge. It is to be used, too, as a room for *discussion* or *debate*, should any associations here, within the circuit of these South Meadows, be organized for such an end—and as a room besides for the display of such interesting and improving curiosities and pictures, as the good judgment of its projector may from time to time select and appropriate out of the stores which his own abundant means enable him readily to accumulate.

This place also is to be used as a room where parties may assemble “to trip the light fantastic toe”—where Colt’s capital may gather, so it pleases, “its beauty and its chivalry,” and all go “merry as a marriage bell” upon a Thanksgiving, or a Christmas Eve—or on the night of an eighth of January, or a twenty-second of February, or of an Election Day, or of the ever-memorable Fourth of July, or upon occasion of any holiday celebrations where the object shall be innocent enjoyment. *Fairs*, too, designed to answer some special philanthropic end, may here make their display. *Concerts* may be given here—finely foretold by stirring harmonies from that Band, now present, which has been originated and munificently endowed by Col. Colt himself, for the worthy purpose of domesticating high musical art within this Armory neighborhood. And to tones of a far graver character than those which issue from the lips of song, or from the mouths of silver instruments, these walls, within the purpose of their owner, may sometimes be allowed to echo—aye, even to the tones of religious teaching, should some “rever-

end champion” perchance, of “meek and unaffected grace,” desire, here upon the new dwellers of this valley, to

“Try each art, reprove each dull delay,  
Allure to brighter worlds, and lead the way.”

Truly the plan, viewed as a whole, is a most happy one—and when all the industrial conceptions of Col. Colt shall have been realized upon this spot, it will be, I think, quite unexampled. It is a truly American and republican movement—this is the aspect in which it strikes me most forcibly. So far as it proposes to afford facilities for instruction, it is founded on the grand idea of placing the labor of this valley upon the platform of intelligence—of elevating it beyond mere physical and mechanical development into the sphere of intellectualized exertion—and so not only of rendering the artisan happier in the use of his skill within the workshop, but more enlightened for the discharge of his other duties, in all his various relations as a member of society, and particularly as a member of our own great American household of faith.

In the true theory of our government and institutions, Labor, we all know, is a far different and loftier element than it is, or ever has been, in the Old World, or anywhere else upon the face of the earth—and is to be met and treated in its alliance with capital in a far different spirit, and with higher purposes in its employment than those which it is doomed to encounter elsewhere. Under European despotisms the doctrine prevails—taught even by philosophers in their text-

books on political economy, and pronounced with magisterial air from the counting-room of almost every wealthy proprietor—that labor is but the instrument, the mere handmaid to furnish the profits of capital, and that its natural and proper pay is mere subsistence.

But with us, on the other hand, it is emphatically the parent of capital. “It earns capital—it is almost universally mixed in with capital.” It is a free, sentient, intelligent, enterprising, accumulating, religious spirit—born when Liberty first awoke upon the shores of this New World, amid the pious thanks and sturdy vows of that noble Exile Band who came here to plant the seeds of a great nation—and spreading its energies since, in the pride of a glorious independence—in the power of a tireless perseverance—and in the mastery and beauty of new and exhaustless invention—until now, almost every hill and valley, woodland and prairie, rock and river, lake and shore, from the Atlantic even to the very verge of the Pacific, and from the Great Lakes to the Mexican Gulf, proudly acknowledges its dominion, and teems with the copiousness of ever-swelling wealth.

How praiseworthy, then, is the spirit, which, by facilities such as Col. Colt promises to offer here, would render the great instrumentality of which I speak, so far as it falls within the sphere of his own influence, enlightened—which, into hands that have opportunity here to drop for a while the tools of labor, puts the tools of knowledge! What important results may not flow from this happy course! How many minds that

otherwise might be condemned never to revolve beyond the confined circle of a machine, and its one unvarying material product, may in this way be enabled to revolve in the unconfined circles of immaterial thought—developing themselves for their own, and for the happiness of others—not adversely to that toil which claims its daily routine—not with the engendering of a spirit that shall learn to look with disdain, or with a grain of discontent even, upon the operations of handicraft—by no means—but developing themselves in harmony with what the hands find to do—with a consciousness of intelligent action that shall lift the veil of humiliation from the meekest, even the lowliest toil—borrowing, in fact, from the riches of knowledge, charms for the beaten path of physical labor, even as the long roadway borrows charms for its own monotonous track from the sweet and ever-changing landscapes that may surround it, and that the blessed sun plays upon.

And who knows—it is a pleasant thought—an anticipation to be cherished—one that the consideration of mere material improvement, of simple brick and mortar, can not, and ought not ever to repress—who knows but that to the opportunities which this apartment may afford to youth and men who shall seek its repose, for self-improvement, society may hereafter become indebted for some new and leading mind—one that from the unmarked retreat of toil may shoot out to startle and star our City, our State, our Country—one, perhaps, that overleaping the bounds of artisanship, under the lure and stimulus of an ambition that shall have been



roused and quickened by incipient culture here, may shine in other walks of life—in the front rank, perhaps, among professional men—at the head of magistracy—in the van, it may be, among statesmen—foremost among public benefactors—a mind that shall leave its impress upon the world, and on the world's history!

So, at times—suddenly—does genius spring from incentives just such as are contemplated here. So, occasionally, does it burst out from the sphere of labor, and “boldly claim a province higher still”—one which, thank Heaven, our own unfettered land freely allots it—for with us, as I have already intimated, Labor has thrown off every badge of feudal servitude. Our offices of honor and of trust are open to all. Our barefooted ploughboys may rise to ride the Steed of State, and wield the rod of republican empire. Our printing press sends forth its Franklin—our shoemaker's bench its Roger Sherman—our blacksmith's forge its General Greene—our rustic inn its General Putnam—our clockmaker's stool its John Fitch—our little grocery shop its Patrick Henry—the rude habitation of a peasant-noble, in the midst of a forest, upon a frontier of civilization, its Daniel Webster—the shanty of an humble Irish emigrant amid the wilds of the Waxhaws, its President Andrew Jackson—a lowly cot upon “the Slashes of the Virginia Hanover,” its Henry Clay—our weaver's loom, its President Fillmore—our machinist's block its self-taught representative of the industrious masses, to be pitted at last—as but a few months since—against “one of the brightest gems of American aristocracy,” and



to win the gavel and the mace of the Speakership in the Capitol of our Great Republic!—Yes, ladies and gentlemen—and from the comparative obscurity of a plain American trading vessel—an adventurous Yankee sailor boy may rise from a dark and cheerless orphanage upon the seas, to claim kindred with the highest inventive genius of the land—may rise to originate and perfect a battle-arm—modeled while tossing on the distant Indian waves—which has completely revolutionized the art of war, and added a new and marvelous security to peace—and which—from the snow-capt Nevadas on the Pacific, to the blood-red plains of the Crimea, the mountains of the Caucasus, and the jungles of Hindostan—itself reports the triumph of American skill, and blazes the fame of an American name!

But this Hall has another and important purpose to serve—I have said—that of affording accommodation for amusement as well as for instruction. It is to be devoted, at intervals, to innocent gaieties—to exhibitions that win to mirthfulness—to the dance, to music, and to song.

Some there are in every community, I am aware—and our own is not an exception to the remark—who frown upon such indulgencies as tending to the demoralization of society. A few indeed there are, who look upon them as even periling humanity both for time and for eternity—who deem all amusements, all flights of pleasantry, all “coruscations of wit, and pun, and pith, and point,” as devices of the Evil one—and who at bare thought of ballets and minuets, of strains from

an opera, or the vocal gymnastics of negro minstrelsy, of feats of necromancy, or a laughter-moving farce, or a comic burlesque, are seized with such ‘virtuous pangs,’ as not only utterly to confound their own peace of mind, but to keep society, if they could, epidemically rasped and heaving with the colic of their own imparted indignation. Harlequin and Jocko, in their apprehension—once admitted into good society—would be sure to precipitate it headlong into ruin.

Now as against all censurers of this order—men “of such vinegar aspect” themselves, as never “to show their teeth by way of smile”—exacerbated men, who would make life all as unjoyous as their own natures—that use of this Hall which we have now under consideration, enters its protest—and on grounds, which, in my judgment, are entirely solid.

Just as if now all this fair creation was to be turned, as they would turn it, into one huge graveyard! As if ascetic macerations constituted the only true moral discipline, and austerity were the sole virtue! As if too it was not a truth—and one indeed crowded with significance—that man is the only being upon earth that is endowed with the power of laughter! As if he was not obliged by his very constitution to unbend at intervals, as the bow, from exercise—or like the bow, however glorious the material of which he may be composed, become feeble, and worthless at last, if kept forever in tension! As if it was not his necessity in fact, to seek pleasures for his eye, his ear, for his every sense—for his whole social and genial, as well as for his

reflective and devotional nature! As if too it were not, in truth, just as absurd to think of measuring all human happiness, as the critics to whom I refer would measure it, by some one sole and exclusive standard—and this the standard set up by themselves—as it would be “to think of discovering one universal stature, or one universal form of the infinitely-varied features of mankind!” And as if, too, indulgencies that are pure and joyous—in relaxation of the mind, and heart, and muscles, and calling into play other and different associations from those which attend the performance of grave and regular daily tasks—did not by the very contrasts of thought which they occasion, and the very exhilaration of spirits which they excite, render the execution of these tasks, when undertaken, all the easier, and therefore all the more productive—did not serve, not only as antidotes to the narcotic influence of toil, and to restore the worn-out body, but to add a new and nervous energy to life—did not cumulate, in fact, the stock of vital action with which to strengthen and swell the labor either of the head or hands!

Why in the department of religious labor even, gentlemen and ladies—I have known an eminent divine pace his parlor habitually, and play the fiddle by the half-hour at a time—not forgetting to include in his musical exercise the martial harmonies of “Hail Columbia,” and even the brisker, quickstep notes of “Yankee Doodle”—and then retire to his study room, and bury himself with profounder devotion, in consequence, in theological exegesis—keep better step, in consequence, to the music and march of David’s triumphal Psalms—

thrill the more enthusiastically over the lofty strains of Isaiah—melt the more deeply over the weird lamentations of Jeremiah—and gather richer and more golden harvests of instruction from the “sententious and royal” wisdom of Solomon.

And I have known also a gentleman in the department of secular labor—a wealthy proprietor—whose cares are enormous—enough at times to crush any ordinary mortal—who, at frequent intervals, beguiles his spirits, calms his consideration, and re-habilitates himself for business, under all its thousand-fold pressures upon his attention, by just placing between his teeth a little harp-shaped instrument—whose spring he strikes dexterously with his finger—whose vibrations he modulates artistically with his breath—and with such happy effect—with strains of yielded melody so soft, so tranquilizing, so even delicious—that all business operations thereafter seem to dance through his hands in perfect time, and with astounding results—even like flying battalions over the chess-board of war, when moved by the genius of an Alexander, a Turenne, or a Napoleon!—So much for the potency of even a common Jews-harp!

In good sooth, ladies and gentlemen, a trifling instrumentality even, in the way of amusement, yields often a great good—and if life be, as usually painted, choked alas with trials—a dark and soul-saddening ordeal for poor human nature—why the more sunshine you can bring to play upon it, the better—the fewer of course will be the clouds. This is my theory. Is it not a good one? Distil into the heart of the traveler



to eternity—viewing man even under this grave aspect—distil drops from the cup of glee, as well as pour currents from the fountains of moral and pious truth—and he will no longer, in my opinion, find Jordan half so “hard a road to travel” as both song and sermon alike represent it to be. Am I not correct? A good laugh, with all its variations, from the bass to the alto—from the scarce audible titter and unuttered grin, on through the buoyant, elastic giggle, and the merry, ringing shout, to the jubilant, and even rampant cackination—is, in my belief, not only an important agent in the generation of health—according to the familiar and well-established physiological maxim of “Laugh, and be fat,”—but even in an economic view, it is a great producer—one of the very best—for it produces content—and content—that especially which springs from a just consideration and a genial sympathy on the part of the employer—is your true quickener of industry—and industry, as we all well know, begets wealth.

Why seriously, ladies and gentlemen, it is matter of cool doubt among many grave public economists in England even at the present time—and among even not a few of her leviathan fundholders too—whether, now that the larger part of her old joy-inspiring holidays are struck from her calendar, and labor, with but comparatively little of repose, is more than ever drawn into the everlasting, all-absorbing, but never-satisfied vortex of the money market—in order to sustain her stupendous national debt, to pamper her aristocracy, and to feed her holocaust of blood and gold on the plains of the

Crimea—I say it is matter of grave doubt whether her productive power, relatively, as it involves human brain and muscle, is half so great as it was when festivals, wakes, and fairs, far oftener than they now do, animated the toil of her people, as in the Elizabethan age, with a grateful and soul-stirring hilarity. Her hospitalities, sports, and rejoicings in the olden time—when heralds before her castle gates shouted “*Largesse*” to “vassal, tenant, serf, and all,” and minstrels sung the exploits of her Robin Hood, and the feuds of the Percy’s with the Douglass clan, and there was lasting good cheer of roast beef, plum pudding, toast, and ale, in even the humblest cottage of “merrie England”—when the long Christmas festivals of a happy and yet unpilaged yeomanry made cold December nights vocal with gayety, and roofs and rafters shake as if they also were alive with merriment—when New Years and the First of May, Shrove Tuesday and Martinmas, seed-time and harvest, far more than at the present day, gladdened her country life with pastime—these enjoyments, proof in themselves of a far easier condition than England now can claim—contributed in a vast degree to nerve the labor of the field, the factory, and the shop—gave to it buoyancy—sweetened it with anticipations of coming enjoyment—and therefore rendered it all the more hearty, ambitious, contented, and productive.

It is a great mistake that in England these carnival seasons, instead of having been moderated and regulated where they required restraint, should have been to so great an extent quite abandoned. The error is

lamented. It is a mistake, too, in our own land that, duly managed, they do not more abound. The fact is, in my view, that our own people are altogether too perseveringly, painfully, and remorselessly even, given up to the almighty dollar. "Thrown upon a new continent," as that all-accomplished statesman, orator, and scholar, Edward Everett, remarked, not long since, at a celebration in Boston,—“eager to do the work of twenty centuries in two—the Anglo-American population has overworked, and is daily overworking itself. From morning to night, from January to December, brain and hands, eyes and fingers, the powers of the body, and the powers of the mind, are in spasmodic, merciless activity.”\* How true! We ought, therefore, as I think, to worship Mammon less, and Momus more—to inaugurate more heart-cheering holidays than we now have—celebrate more feasts of families—keep more harvest homes—burn larger Christmas logs—garland taller May poles—and devote larger hecatombs of beeves and poultry for grateful distribution in delighted neighborhoods, and to “the poor in the parish.” We ought to establish more numerous seasons for gifts of remembrance—for the Sevres-vase offering of friendship, if we can afford it—for caskets concealing the diamond—and for the golden turtle doves, dear to Venus. We should, in short, love and cherish, far more than we now do, the ivy, the holly, and the ever-

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\* “Our people,” adds Mr. Everett, “have not yet learned the lesson contained in the very word recreation, which teaches that the worn-out man is *re-created*, made over again by the seasonable relaxation of the strained faculties.”

green—the new flowers of spring—the ripened festoons of summer—and the golden corn ears of yellow autumn. True, our old ancestral forms of enjoyment have, many of them, passed away—some of them, perhaps, for the better—but the feeling that craves hilarity, in one shape or another, still remains—movelessly rooted in the great heart of mankind—and it is one of the worthiest of purposes—it is the part of essential wisdom as well as of beautiful charity—in any system of labor, under any government, in every community, to provide for its due indulgence.

So thinks the projector of this structure—and thinks rightly. With Dr. Johnson he is of opinion that good humor is “the balm of life—the quality to which all that adorns or elevates mankind must owe its power of pleasing.” With the philosopher Montaigne, he believes that “the most manifest sign of Wisdom is continued Cheerfulness”—that without this element Life is “a Lapland winter without a sun”—that with it, Labor will ever be encountered with a placid smile—that before it difficulties dissolve like snow-drifts before the God of Day—and therefore it is, that he would have bubbles of innocent mirth rise at times within these walls, and burst over a sea of happy faces.

Thus much, ladies and gentlemen, in explanation, and in maintenance of the purposes for which this Hall has been established. It remains now only, in conformity with the request of the projector of this structure, that I should bestow upon it a name.

To this duty then I turn. My secular baptistery is



here. The special sponsor for the occasion is here,\* and here is a crowd of living witnesses. And yonder, in near neighborhood to this our place of assemblage—in loving familiarity, for hoary centuries, with the aspects of this valley, alike in sunshine and in storm—alike when it was dotted with the wigwams of the Red Man, and when our own ancestral Pale Faces first came to claim it—and now that it promises soon, its agricultural fast yielding to other uses, to become crowded with workshops and habitations—yonder, in solitary grandeur almost overshadowing us from its own hill-top, and overlooking the majestic Connecticut, and the new and wonderful creations which the might of manufacturing art has here but as yesterday evolved—yonder, in the glory of a patriotic history that is unmatched by aught else of its own nature upon earth—stands that Monarch Tree, the CHARTER OAK! It has already often vouchsafed its opulent, expressive name. Our State is gloriously known in history, and in common parlance is proclaimed, as the *Charter Oak State*. The river and the sea have borrowed the name for the steamer and the ship. Organized associations—the Bank, the Insurance Company, and the Lodge—employ it. It circulates, beautifully impressed, on their bills, their life policies, and on their badges. It glitters, in its gilded symbol, on the accoutrements of the military company. It figures on the hotel, the store, the refectory, the saloon, and the market place. It has long distinguished

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\* At this point the speaker turned to Col. Colt.

a leading street of our city—that upon which, continued in avenue amplitude down to this the Great River of New England, we are assembled to-night. Yet, though often used, the good name never degenerates into triteness. It has, fortunately, resources of meaning that no consumption can waste. It is indeed forever exhaustless.

Under the authority then to me committed by the lawful proprietor of this edifice—the first-born structure, as, felicitously, it happens to be, upon this new-made avenue—and by virtue too of my own particular warrant as the lawful proprietor of the Oak itself—in view of the truly useful, liberal, and gladdening purposes which this Hall is designed to answer—considering also gravely the fact—vouched for by its Sponsor here—that the Spirit which is to reign within its walls, assents immovably unto all the articles of the Charter Oak faith—I do therefore hereby name, proclaim, and publish this spacious apartment to the world as the **CHARTER OAK HALL!**

And in eminent token thereof—with this genuine Ritual-Wood—from the Oak itself—and bearing its title emblazoned in letters of silver—I do hereby wed NAME and HALL—and pronounce them one and indissoluble. now and forever!

Into your hands, Sir,\* appropriately, I commit this token—to be by you affixed conspicuously upon this Hall—here to remain to bespeak its name, and to mark

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\* Here the Speaker placed the ritual-wood in the hands of Col. Colt.

its dedication for all time, to good, and honorable, and cheerful ends. And may the reputation of this apartment be ever consonant to the appellation it now bears! May it ever steadily fulfil all the purposes which a well-appointed Assembly-Room can be made to serve, in the midst of a community of artizans that shall be sustained and improved through your own industrial genius, and your benevolent care—becoming to them a spot of attractive resort when they are at leisure from toil—and a spot where you, Sir—through countless happy consequences that shall flow from this worthy application of your means—may find the most abundant cause for rejoicing!”

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Here Mr. Stuart resumed his seat, amid the long continued plaudits of the audience, and at this moment the peal of a cannon was heard reverberating over the city. It was the first of a salute of thirty-two guns, which was fired from the dyke adjacent to the Hall by the young men of the Armory, who had prepared the surprise as a mark of their own interest in the ceremonies, without the knowledge of those who had participated in the proceedings at the Hall. Col. Colt, having received from the hands of Mr. Stuart the large and exquisitely beautiful tablet of wood from the Charter

Oak, with the name of the Hall emblazoned thereon in letters of silver, affixed it on the wall of the Hall, in the rear of the platform, amid the cheers of the audience. The Band then struck up "Hail to the Chief," and after the execution of this piece of music, Hon. Henry C. Deming, the Mayor of the city, rose and spoke as follows:





## SPEECH OF MR. DEMING.

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MR. CHAIRMAN AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

WHEN Norna of the Fitful-Head descended from the lofty crag, where she was wont to weave her magic spells, and chant her invocations to the god of storms, she was received by the inhabitants of Zetland with every mark of homage, reverence and hospitality. In the same manner, O ancient and mysterious Scæva!\* we welcome thee, descending from yonder hill where thou art wont to muse and meditate, and commune with the spirits of the past, we welcome thee, laying aside thy tablets and singing robes for a season, to mingle in the pursuits and pastimes of us mere mortals of the plain, to cheer us with these witching traditions of the past, and to lift our load and smooth our path, with the inspiration of thy charitable and genial philosophy. In behalf of Col. Colt, I accept the names which thou† hast bestowed on these streets and avenues, because as the anointed priest and oracle of the past, thou hast the right to reproduce it in the present, and to trans-

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\* A name by which Mr. Stuart is known as Antiquarian.

† Mr. Deming is no Quaker but he carries out the idea with which the reply opens by addressing Mr. Stuart in the second person singular.

mit it by enduring associations and memorials to the future. I accept too, for him the name of thine own venerable tree, which thou hast just conferred upon this Hall, because as the lord, the guardian, and the Clio of the Oak, thou hast a right to impart its cherished appellation and to distribute its honors. By his authority I declare, that by these names the streets and avenues, that by this name this Hall shall be known and designated in all future time.

Before performing this imposing rite, thou hast been pleased to exact from the spirit which presides here, obedience to the Charter-Oak faith. If we are to understand that this faith imposes upon us the defense of our own rights whenever and wheresoever assailed, the rendering of exact and impartial justice to all who may be temporarily under our protection, and the maintenance of those doctrines of popular sovereignty foreshadowed in the old Charter, then I for this *infant*—restive and intractable though he sometimes be,—then I for him promise and vow obedience to the requisitions of a faith so reasonable.

Thou hast said, that we have here practically illustrated the harmonious coöperation of capital and labor. Labor! we hold that it is the poor man's sole property, that none is more sacred, that nothing deserves from our hands more absolute encouragement and protection. Capital! it is the twin-brother of labor, or rather they are Siamese-twins, not self-existent, self-sustained, but mutually dependent upon each other for life, health and strength. But although every law, moral and eco-

nomical, every principle conceded by statesmen, and thinkers, and economists, of every diverse school and creed, establish not a conflict, but an absolute identity of interest between capital and labor; although it is universally conceded that both should coöperate, like the hands of a sane man, to execute the behests of the will, yet, such is the perversity of human action, they have been frequently found, like the hands of a madman, dashing furiously together, until both were bleeding and disabled.

We enter our protest against any such fratricidal warfare here. This Hall is our witness that to promote leisure and provide for it, is as much the duty of capital as to enforce works. To confine the operative forever to a meager stipend, and to the ranks of mere manual labor, is no part of our creed, but we here provide him with the time, the education and social advantages that shall enable him some day, to become an inventor, a master-workman, a capitalist himself. The Library, the Reading Room, the Lecture Room, the School for Art, the Music which is to wake the echoes of the mead and woo the Naiad of the stream, the song, the dance, the social gathering—smoothing the brow of care and relieving the over-strained muscles—these are the bonds, the sureties, the guaranties which Col. Colt freely proffers to the *future*, that in this establishment, labor shall be intelligent, happy, healthy and free; for the *past*, there sits by his side a witness, Mr. Root, who has risen from the anvil to the general superintendency of the largest Armory in the world, and to the enjoyment of the



largest salary in the State, and by *his* side, yet another, Mr. Lord, the superintendent of the Arm's Department, who starting from the same point has attained a position and an income which might well fill the measure of any man's ambition ; while as vouchers for the *present*, there are, following hard upon them, scores of young men in these vast works, destined, I devoutly believe, because their advantages are infinitely superior, to a still higher eminence in the same noble career.

Col. Colt is not then here this evening, Mr. Chairman, in the spirit of speculation, nor in the spirit of self-glory to bestow an honored name on this triangular piece of brick and mortar, but he is here to found an institution, to inaugurate an alliance for the reciprocal benefit of capital and labor, which if his wishes and mind can aught avail shall endure, until my bones and his become as fleshless and friable as those of the old Dutchman we disinterred in digging its foundations. As in the Armory below, we weld the steel, the wood, and the brass into a weapon which as you say, has almost revolutionized modern warfare, we here shall weld the skillful hand, the enlightened mind and the animating and inspiring soul into a still mightier instrument. We are about to group and blend into one imposing piece three statues, that frequently stand isolated and alone, but which have for each other natural attractions and affinities. The central figure is colossal, with the physical development and proportions of the Grecian Hercules, the head massive, the brow corrugated ; the eye eager and intent, is fastened upon a strong mus-

cular hand, which holds the little weapon that all the world over, from California's mountains to Coromandel's coast, is the surest safe-guard and protector of civilized men; on the right, gazing benignantlly on the grim colossus, stands a figure graceful and classic in form and outline, with face and lineaments refined, spiritual and lighted up with more than mortal loveliness, it is that intelligence which thou hast so beautifully described; on the left is a gay laughing dancing sprite, with flowing curls, and a wreath on her head, and a lute in her hand; it is the amusement thou hast so graphically delineated. If there is a statuary amongst you, let him mould and group these figures, and place them here, as a perpetual emblem and memorial, of the uses and purposes to which this Hall is now dedicated.

You may have supposed that your model Armory, with its solid walls, its magnificent steam-engine, its iron columns for support and ventilation, its new fangled geering and shafting, its dexterous and magical machinery, and its thousand appliances for aiding and economizing labor, was complete and finished up to the very last touch of perfection; we are about to add to it something, without which it would be as imperfect, as one leg of a pair of tongs, one blade of a pair of shears, or (to use stronger illustration) as a starched, stiff, unapproachable old-maid, or a cold, morose, forlorn, miserable bachelor, or any other half made and useless contrivance; we are about to add to the Armory its counterpart, to unite, to wed, to marry the forge and the workshop to the READING ROOM and the DANCING HALL.

Time would fail me to respond in fitting terms to the generous compliments, which both of you, gentlemen, have lavished upon Col. Colt. He is proud to feel that you and his fellow citizens regard his enterprise as not entirely unworthy of such commendation. It was the dream of his boyhood,—a dream which under the most extraordinary difficulties, discouragements and reverses, sustained and cheered him,—that if Providence should ever smile upon his industry and energy, he would here upon this very spot, where thou hast mapped out the historic antecedents of the colony, rear an establishment which should not only be an honor to his native town, but a light—a landmark to those who should follow him in the weary and disheartening pilgrimage of mechanical genius. We have before us a most splendid realization of the poor boy's dream. And it seems to me, Sir, that the great moral suggested by this occasion, taught by a success so transcendent from beginnings so humble, proclaimed by this princely domain, by these massive and imposing structures, by this encircling causeway, which saith, (as has already been remarked,) to the full spring volume of New England's noblest river, "thus far shalt thou come and no farther," by the prosperity which crowns the cup and the heart of Col. Colt,—the great lesson which every thing within, above, and around us, upon this auspicious eve, enforces upon the toiling artisan is this, "in the depths of thy despondency never despair." If there is one of you to whom, in those moments of depression and foreboding which assail us all, one to whom the world seems a wilderness,

and the future a black and portentous cloud, from whence not one ray of encouragement or hope emanates, to him I can say, look to your principal and his aids, like them you may yet break from the fetters of iron fortune, like them you may yet realize the dream of your boyhood, and rise like them, triumphant and glorious from the sepulcher of despair.

Let me now drop my representative character and say one word in my own. If the Chairman had not already, in language more eloquent and felicitous than I can hope to employ, exhibited the great advantages of these south-meadow improvements to the city, and vindicated the wisdom of the municipal legislation by which they have been encouraged, I should feel called upon to discuss at some length these fruitful themes. It only remains for me now to add a single illustration to one of his suggestions. What gives the greatest value to land? Land is valuable for its mineral wealth, for tillage, from its proximity to water privileges, or to the ocean the great highway of nations. But why is an acre in the neighborhood of Wall street worth more than a principality in Oregon? In mineral wealth, in water privileges, for tillage, the larger domain is infinitely superior, and if the one is on the shores of the Atlantic, the other is washed by the great Pacific sea. The difference is due to the presence in the one case, and to the absence in the other of *population*. It is the number of people on it, which gives its greatest value to land. Why too does a store or a manufactory on the corner of Broadway and Pine rent for its thousands,



while a store or manufactory on the corner of Main and Broad streets in Astoria, is abandoned to the owls and the bats? The same word, population, answers the question. What gives vitality and vigor to all our moral, social and spiritual interests? Compare the churches, schools, libraries, lectures, music, art, manners of Hartford and of some thinly settled town. Why is the standard of all these higher in the former than the latter? It is because all these interests, spiritual, intellectual, esthetic, depend in a great measure upon material prosperity, and that draws its life from population. Every man, then, brought into these workshops, every family that settles on the meadows, adds not only to the value of your land and houses, but to your value as men, to the permanence and progress of your colleges, schools and churches, to that higher wealth which is weighed and measured, not by the grand list, but by the moral intellectual and social elevation of a people. The important truths contained in these queries vindicate the aid which the city has extended to this enterprise. Fortunately, in this case, blessings have not come single, and while we are able to rejoice that Col. Colt has given an accelerated impulse to all the most vital interests of his native town, we are also able to congratulate him that at the same time, he has benefited himself. He has, at all events, saved his heirs and executors from raising in any of our cemeteries any costly monument or mausoleum to his name, for he has reared an imperishable one to himself; and we can say of him, as was said of Sir Christopher Wren, who built St. Paul's, and was buried beneath its

dome, *si quæris monumentum circumspice*, if you seek for *his* monument look around !

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At the conclusion of Mr. Deming's address, when the long applause which ensued had subsided, the Band struck up "Hail Columbia." This was followed by another striking and most appropriate piece of music from *Il Trovatore*, entitled, "*The Anvil Chorus*," with anvil accompaniments—after which, on motion of Allyn Goodwin Esquire, the meeting adjourned.

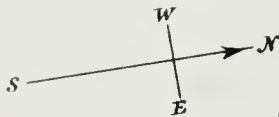






# HARTFORD in 1840.

Prepared from the Original Records.  
By Vote of the Town and drawn by  
William S. Porter,  
Surveyor and Antiquarian



Part of the  
Ox Pasture



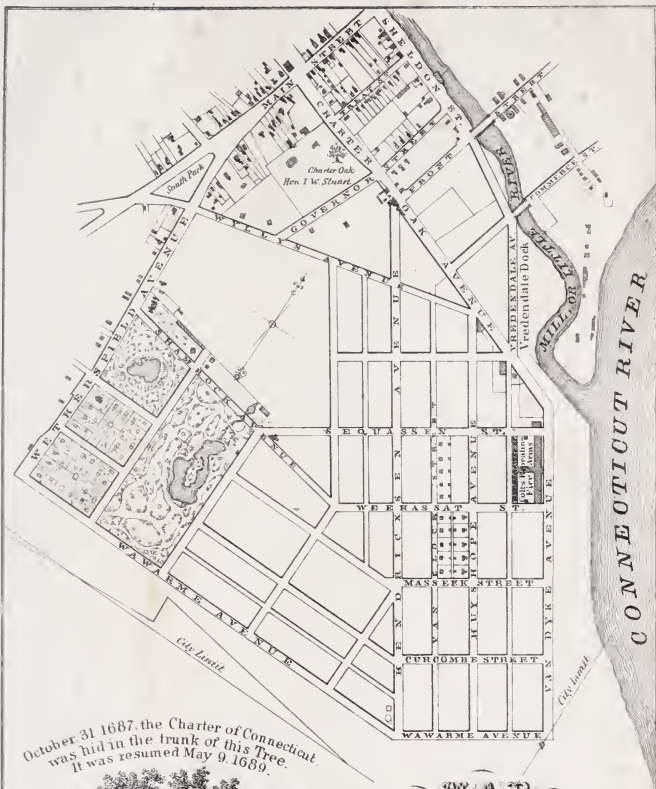


MAP OF  
South Meadow,  
HARTFORD, CONN.  
Showing Lands purchased by  
COL. COLT.

1853.







October 31 1687, the Charter of Connecticut  
was hid in the trunk of this Tree.  
It was resumed May 9. 1689.



CHARLES OAK.

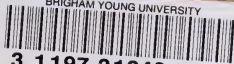
MAP  
Shewing the  
Lands & Improvements  
UPON THE  
SOUTH MEADOW  
in the City of Hartford,  
Belonging to  
SAMUEL COLT.

1856.





BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY



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